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# TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT

1944.

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# REPORTS

OF THE

# MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND SANITARY SURVEYOR

FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1944.

GREAT TORRINGTON:
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Health Department,
Hodge's Chambers,
Torrington.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington Rural District Council.*

Gentlemen,

We have pleasure in presenting our Annual Reports for the year ended 31st December, 1944.

We are, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

**E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.**

Medical Officer of Health.

**F. G. GANE, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.**

Sanitary Inspector & Building Surveyor.

# Torrington Rural District.

## 1944

## General Statistics.

| | |
|---|---|
| Area (Acres)... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 79,793 |
| Population (R.G.) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 7,135 |
| Number of Inhabited Houses ... ... ... ... | 2,223 |
| Rateable Value ... ... ... ... ... ... | £19,066 |
| Sum realised by a penny rate ... ... ... | £79 19s. 6d. |

## Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Live Births ... ... Male 63, Female 40, Total 103.

Increase of 14 over previous year.

Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated Population ... ... 14·4

Deaths ... 75. An increase of 4.

Death Rate per 1000 of estimated Resident Population ... 10·5

## General Sanitary Conditions of the District.

### Officials.

The Officials of the District are the Medical Officer of Health, who is a part time official, and a full time Sanitary Surveyor. A Monthly Report is made to the Council.

### Nursing.

The District is provided with Midwives and Nurses by Nursing Associations with the help of County Council grants. There also appear to be an increasing number of Inspectors.

### Hospitals.

The District is served by Torrington, Bideford, Barnstaple and Exeter Hospitals. Most of these want doubling in size judging from the waiting lists.

### School and County Health Services.

Clinics of various sorts are increasing and appear popular.

### Isolation Hospital and Infectious Diseases.

Very little Infectious Disease has occurred during the last year. The District is well served by the combined areas Isolation Hospital at Bideford, and Tuberculosis is admirably looked after by the County T.B. Officer.

### Ambulance Service.

The area is served by Ambulances at Bideford and Barnstaple. There is an excellent new one presented to Torrington by it's sister town in the United States.

### Laboratory Facilities.

The County Laboratory at Exeter provides an excellent service for all examinations and investigations.

### Schools.

These are being brought up to date, but can never be good until a main water supply is provided for the area.

### Maternity Services.

The District Midwives look after the majority of mothers and there are also visiting Health Visitors. Patients have examination before and after their confinements by their own doctor under a health scheme. In these days of no help being available more and more expectant mothers have to go to hospitals. The County Health Department has made some arrangements throughout the district for this. However, local councils must be prepared to watch the progress of a new adventure as it may be that the planners of the County may try to segregate all prospective mothers into four or five large maternity hospitals, causing inconvenience and discomfort to the patients and their friends. Local hospital accommodation should be provided as far as possible.

### Dairies and Cowsheds.

These have to a large extent been improved as far as can be expected. They are, however, a motley collection, and a large number want re-building on modern lines and urgently need a main water supply in many cases.

### Housing.

This has been held up during the War, but a big building programme will soon be due, and it is hoped that before this is started an adequate and pure water supply will be found for them at all periods of the year. It seems this was almost impossible in the past!

### Water.

A main supply for the area is urgent, and it is doubtful whether any real improvements can be obtained without it.

# Annual Report of the Sanitary Inspector.

## General Inspections.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of rooms disinfected ... ... ... ... | 6 |
| ,, ,, visits to cases of Infectious Disease ... | 15 |
| ,, ,, drains tested ... ... ... ... | 10 |
| ,, ,, houses inspected ... ... ... ... | 14 |
| ,, ,, houses re-inspected... ... ... ... | 35 |
| ,, ,, cowsheds inspected... ... ... ... | 53 |
| ,, ,, Bakehouses inspected ... ... ... | 5 |
| ,, ,, Schools inspected ... ... ... ... | 12 |
| ,, ,, Water samples taken ... ... ... | 27 |
| ,, ,, miscellaneous visits... ... ... ... | 426 |

## Nuisances Abated.

| | |
|---|---|
| Defective walls and ceilings repaired ... ... ... | 21 |
| Roofs repaired ... ... ... ... ... ... | 6 |
| Chimneys repaired ... ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| Spouting repaired or renewed ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Filthy houses cleaned ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Defective floors repaired or renewed ... ... ... | 10 |
| Dangerous stairs repaired ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Fireplaces repaired or rebuilt ... ... ... ... | 6 |
| Sinks and waste pipes provided ... ... ... | 6 |
| Furnaces repaired or rebuilt ... ... ... ... | 2 |
| Yard paving repaired ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Houses repointed or rendered ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| New doors provided ... ... ... ... ... | 7 |
| Windows renewed or repaired ... ... ... ... | 10 |
| Wash-houses repaired ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Water supply provided indoors... ... ... ... | 5 |
| Food stores provided ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Cooking facilities improved ... ... ... ... | 4 |
| Drains cleared from obstruction ... ... ... | 3 |
| Inspection chambers provided or repaired ... ... | 7 |
| New drains provided ... ... ... ... ... | 7 |
| New gullies provided ... ... ... ... ... | 6 |
| Defective drains relaid ... ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Drains repaired ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1 |
| Water-closet cisterns repaired or renewed ... ... | 4 |
| Water-closet pedestals repaired or renewed ... ... | 3 |
| New pail closets provided ... ... ... ... | 2 |
| Offensive accumulations removed ... ... ... | 2 |
| Keeping of animals improved ... ... ... ... | 3 |
| Pollution of water-courses abated ... ... ... | 1 |

# Housing.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of New Houses erected by private enterprise ... | 2 | |
| Number of Houses erected by Local Authority ... ... | 2 | |
| | | — 4 |

**Housing (Rural Workers') Act, 1926.**

One house has been reconditioned with the aid of grants under the above Act and work is proceeding on another.

**1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (a) | Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... ... ... | 17 |
| | (b) | Number of inspections made for the purpose | 25 |
| (2) | (a) | Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ... ... ... | 3 |
| | (b) | Number of inspections made for the purpose | 3 |
| (3) | | Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... ... | Nil |
| (4) | | Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... ... ... | 3 |

**2. Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of formal Notices:—**

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ... ... | 14 |

**3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year:**

**A. Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | | Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... | Nil |
| (2) | | Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:— | |
| | (a) | by owners ... ... ... | Nil |
| | (b) | by local authority in default of owners ... | Nil |

**B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—**

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ... ... 3

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service or formal notices :—

(a) by owners ... ... ... 3
(b) by local authority in default of owners ... Nil

**C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.**

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... ... Nil

(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... ... Nil

**D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930**

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ... ... Nil

(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ... ... ... Nil

**Infectious Disease.**

6 cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year. Disinfection was carried out in each case, the method used being fumigation with formalin.

**Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk Supply.**

There are 558 registered Cow-keepers in the District including 89 Retailers. During the year visits have been made to some of the farms and advice has been given on clean milk production and recommendations made regarding structural alterations. The following improvements have been carried out :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Floors, standings, etc., concreted | ... | 3 |
| Lighting and ventilation improved | ... | 6 |
| Walls rendered | ... ... | 3 |
| Drainage improved | ... ... | 6 |
| Approaches improved | ... ... | 2 |
| New cowsheds erected | ... ... | 1 |

There are 28 Accredited Producers and 4 Tuberculin Tested Producers in the District.

Most of the milk produced is delivered to two milk factories where samples are regularly taken for examination under the National Milk Testing Scheme.

Samples are also taken by the County Council from T. T. and Accredited producers.

## Inspection and Supervision of Food.

The slaughter of animals for food in this district is carried out at the Government Abattoir at Bideford, and the carcases and offals are inspected before allocation.

The Public Health (Meat) Regulations are complied with by the butchers.

The following articles of food were inspected on grocers' premises and condemned as unfit for human consumption :—

18lbs. bacon, decomposition.
24lbs. dried cod, decomposition.
18½lbs. margarine, rancid.
3½lbs. biscuit mixture, stale.
4½lbs. spice, stale.
7½lbs. cayenne pepper, stale.
20 packets soup, stale.
1½ dozen sponge mixture, stale.
15lbs. cocoa, stale.

## Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

No new sewers have been laid during the year.

A new septic tank has been installed at Sheepwash.

## Scavenging.

Household refuse is, generally, disposed of by burning or tipping. During the year arrangements have been made for the regular house-to-house collection of refuse in the village of Winkleigh and proper disposal of same.

## Water Supplies.

There are 26 public wells in the District. Samples of water from these are sent for analysis from time to time. Some parishes were restricted in their water supplies during the summer. The water supply of the District cannot be regarded as satisfactory and it is hoped that a piped supply will soon be available.

**Laboratory Facilities.**

The Devon County Council undertake the analysis of milk, water, and foodstuffs at their Laboratory at Exeter.

I consider it regrettable that samples of water from private domestic sources are not accepted under this scheme.